



ARL is an Authority on Nutrition and the Science of Balancing Body Chemistry Through Hair Tissue Mineral Analysis!

Hair Tissue Mineral Analysis


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Craving Sugars and Carbohydrates

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Craving Sugars and Carbohydrates

One of the most common symptoms submitted by clients is a "craving for sugars or starches". This craving often prevents them from eating a healthy diet and contributes to a decline in their overall health. Let us examine the causes and ways to address this common symptom.

Hypoglycemia And Diabetes

Many individuals with carbohydrate craving have some degree of carbohydrate intolerance, often manifesting as low blood sugar, low sugar in the cells or low ATP. *[The source of energy that keeps everything going is called ATP. Adenosine triphosphate (ATP) is the biochemical way to store and use energy.]* This causes an "energy crisis" in which one craves simple or complex carbohydrates to provide fuel or energy for the body. According to Dr. Robert Atkins, MD, up to 75% of the American people have some degree of carbohydrate intolerance.

Diabetics experience a craving for sweets or starches because they are not able to move sugars from their blood into their cells. Therefore, they experience low *cellular* sugar. This may be caused by low insulin, resistance to insulin, or other nutritional causes.

Nutritional Causes

Many nutrients are needed for carbohydrate metabolism. Zinc is needed to produce digestive enzymes to digest all foods. Zinc is also required to produce, secrete and sustain the action of insulin. Insulin in turn is required to move sugars into the cells. Chromium is needed to help insulin attach to cell walls.

Manganese is needed in the mitochondria of the cells for energy production. Copper and iron are required for the electron transport system, where most ATP is produced. Vanadium appears to play a role in carbohydrate tolerance as well.

B-vitamins are involved in the energy cycles, and vitamin E helps protect many delicate enzyme systems involved in energy production. Many other compounds are also required in the digestion, absorption, transport and conversion of carbohydrate foods to energy.

An adequate intake of many nutrients through a healthy diet and supplementation helps assure that the steps to convert food to energy will proceed normally. Dietary supplements are often necessary if one is under stress or their nutritional reserves are depleted.

Toxic Metals

Deficiencies or blockages at any stage of the energy pathway - the path of conversion of foods into energy - can cause an energy deficit that may result in a craving for sugars or complex carbohydrates. Toxic metals and other toxins can block enzyme reactions and interfere with the energy pathway.

Fast And Slow Oxidation

Dr. Paul Eck found that fast oxidizers burn their food rapidly and tend to have a low level of glycogen, the storage form of sugar. When reserves are used up due to stress, activity, or improper diet, the blood sugar can drop suddenly, accompanied by strong sugar cravings. Eating enough fats and oils can help prevent this occurrence.

Slow oxidizers often have a chronic low blood sugar level, due to sluggish adrenal glands and/or thyroid activity. The adrenal hormones help raise the blood sugar. Eating adequate protein with each meal can often prevent or reduce this cause of sugar craving. Slow oxidizers also often have more heavy metal toxicity that can contribute to problems in the energy pathway.

The Yeast Connection

Overgrowth of intestinal candida albicans is common today, due to antibiotic, steroid and birth control pill use, copper imbalance and weakened immune systems. Yeast organisms thrive on sugars in the diet and produce alcohol and acetaldehyde. When the yeast requires nourishment, they can produce a mild alcohol withdrawal syndrome.

This may be accompanied by strong cravings for sugars and carbohydrates. In this case, one is not craving carbohydrates for oneself, but for the candida organisms that are living in the intestine. A vicious cycle often develops in which a weakened immune system permits yeast overgrowth. This causes sugar cravings, which further weakens the immune system, worsening the yeast condition.

A simple way to determine if candida is a factor in one's cravings is to eliminate all or most carbohydrates from the diet for a week, and take an anti-candida supplement such as caprylic acid. If one goes through a withdrawal syndrome but then feels better, often candida was present. If the case is very chronic, the anti-candida medication may need to be continued for a year or more, while following a nutrition program to rebalance body chemistry.

A Natural Tranquilizer

Carbohydrates help to elevate serotonin levels. This has a tranquilizing effect and can feel very good for those under chronic stress. Unfortunately, a vicious cycle is common, in which one eats carbohydrates to feel better, but the diet is incorrect and incomplete and this only leads to more stress.

Carbohydrates also lower the tissue zinc level and raise the sodium level. This gives a short energy boost and can temporarily improve imbalances such as a low sodium/potassium ratio. Carbohydrates also increase the inflammatory prostaglandins and the insulin level. These effects may cause cravings in some people, especially those addicted to stress.

Craving Nutrients

A person may crave carbohydrates or other foods, in an attempt to obtain additional trace minerals or other nutrients. This scenario was observed in a young boy who was raised on organic, whole grains. When sent away to summer camp where only white flour products were served, the boy began to eat three times as much bread and other starches. It is likely he was craving the nutrients that should have been in the starch. Because they were missing, he craved more of the bread.

Many people find their cravings diminish when they switch to a diet of minimally-processed, organically-grown, whole foods. In addition, the supplementation of manganese, zinc, chromium and vanadium assist some people with carbohydrate cravings.

A better approach, however, is to follow a scientific nutrition program based on a properly performed and interpreted hair analysis. This combines proper diet, specific supplements and a healthful lifestyle for each person. This is the most effective way to address the underlying, subtle imbalances that contribute to carbohydrate cravings and the vicious cycles with which they are associated.

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